ONE THOUSAND BIBLE READINGS

WETZEL

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ONE THOUSAND BIBLE READINGS

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ONE THOUSAND BIBLE READINGS

A Guide to Bible Readings

ESPECIALLY ARRANGED AND ADAPTED FOR USE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ALSO FOR CHURCH AID AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES, MISSION CIRCLES AND THE HOME ALTAR.

BY

REV. D. J. WETZEL

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible by common consent occupies the foremost place among the literary masterpieces of the world. This distinction is accorded it because of its value as literature entirely apart from its value as the revelation of the divine will to man.

But if a wide acquaintance with its contents and a real appreciation of its literary value be regarded as essential to a sound education, a cursory examination of the biblical knowledge of students in high schools and colleges will convince the examiner that our scheme of teaching has failed at this point. For not only are the references in standard literature to events and characters of the Old and New Testament practically meaningless to hundreds of our otherwise well informed young people, but even the great outstanding biblical characters are scarcely better known than are the shadowy rulers of the Chow dynasty of ancient China.

However, before we blame the teacher in the elementary grades for failure to familiarize the children with the great men and women of biblical times, let us remember that instruction in the public schools is limited to the regular curriculum, and that religious instruction in most states is positively forbidden. The policy in recent years

has been to regard the church, the Sunday school, and the home as the places where religious instruction may properly be given. With this general policy few will disagree, but leaders in our public schools, far-sighted business men, and executives of cities and states have begun to realize that thousands of children whose parents are not affiliated with any church or religious organization will never become familiar with the great book of ethics unless the public schools bring them into immediate contact with it. Accordingly there is a widespread movement to require the reading of the Bible in the public schools. Scarcely less clearly defined is the purpose to avoid sectarian instruction and in at least four states the statute requiring biblical reading, specifically provides that such reading shall be "without comment."

Few teachers feel themselves qualified to make a judicious selection for school reading from the pages of the Bible. Clearly the passages selected should not be controversial in character; they should be adapted to the comprehension of young children; they should be objective, narrative, descriptive, or lyrical in character. Judicious selections should be made from the life history of Moses, Joseph, and other great leaders, so that the children may not miss the charm that envelops these stories of the olden time. The question then facing the teacher is clearly, "how may I select the biblical readings so that the pupils may receive both profit and enjoyment?" The compiler of the "One Thousand Bible Readings" has sought to answer this question by arranging the selections so that they will give from day to day the story of the

great biblical characters. These selections are prevailingly narrative and are suited to pupils of any grade. It will be possible also for the teacher to find selections suited to any holiday or season. The topical index will enable her to select passages adapted to any civic or moral virtues that she desires to emphasize.

The compiler of these selections is well qualified for the work he has undertaken. He has for years been a student of the Bible, and now presents his studies in a concrete, practical form that will fill a long recognized want in our public school system: a compilation of biblical readings, neither sectarian nor controversial, that will make the stories, the poetry, and the exalted ethical teachings of the Bible available to every teacher and pupil.

EZRA LEHMAN.
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PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is to furnish the teacher in the public school with a ready reference volume to the more simple, helpful, and practical passages of the Bible. It comes to you as the result of careful study and investigation into the manner in which the devotional period is being conducted in the public schools. Upon inquiry from many teachers and from personal visitation of many schools, I have learned that the matter of selecting appropriate scripture lessons for the devotional period is one of difficulty for the teacher. Yet, it is true that the majority of our teachers use the Bible in the devotional period. The use of this "Guide" will relieve the anxiety of the teacher, save him time and render him and the school valuable service.

I. State Rulings on Bible Reading in the Public Schools.

All the states have some ruling pertaining to the use of the Bible in the public schools. This ruling is not always made by legislative enactment but in some cases by others in authority as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. A survey of conditions reveals that

nearly all the states of the Union permit the reading of the Bible in the public schools. The teacher has wisely employed this privilege for it has been estimated by the National Reform Association that the Bible "is habitually read in three-fourths of American Public Schools." At least four states require Bible reading by legislative enactment. I quote the law of Pennsylvania which is one of the states requiring Bible reading.

The Law. "Laws of Pennsylvania," session 1913. No. 159, Page, 226.

"An act regulating reading of the Holy Bible in the Public Schools of this Commonwealth. Whereas, The rules and regulations governing the reading of the Holy Bible in the public schools of this Commonwealth are not uniform; and Whereas, It is in the interest of good moral training, of a life of honorable thought and of good citizenship, that the public school children should have lessons of morality brought to their attention during their school days; therefore, Be it enacted, etc., That at least ten verses from the Holy Bible shall be read, or caused to be read, without comment, at the opening of each and every public school, upon each and every school day by the teacher in charge: Provided, That where any teacher has other teachers under and subject to direction, then the teacher exercising this authority shall read the Holy Bible, or cause it to be read, as herein directed. Section 2. That if any school teacher, whose duty it shall be to read the Holy Bible, or cause it to be read, as directed in this act, shall fail or omit so to do, said school teacher shall, upon charges preferred for such failure or omission, and

proof of the same, before the governing board of the school district, be discharged. Approved May, 20, 1913."

From the thought of the law which you have just read, it is clear that the state recognizes the fundamental value of the Bible as the basis upon which to build life for good citizenship. In equipping the pupil for life, it is necessary to quicken the conscience, to appeal strongly to the moral nature of the child developing the sense of duty and to import clear ideas of right and wrong. Proper Bible readings will make this appeal. The Bible contains the highest moral principles and the noblest ideals of life. It is the Book of biographies, setting forth in real living persons both the destructive power of sin and the triumphant power of righteousness. To inculcate these lofty and living principles into the life of the pupil is to insure a better citizenship and a greater state.

II. How Shall the Teacher Fulfill the Highest Privileges and Requirements of the State?

Two things are necessary. First, the passage to be read must be a suitable one. Secondly, the passage must be read intelligently and interestingly.

First. Even if the average daily reading would be fifteen verses, only a small part of the Bible could be read in the school year. Furthermore, it is true that there is much material in the Bible that is too difficult for school pupils. Since, therefore, we have such a vast amount of material from which to select and since much of that is foreign to all practical purposes, it becomes all the more necessary that care be exercised in our choice. This "Guide" furnishes Bible readings carefully chosen for

schoolroom purposes. I have observed that it is a rather general practise for teachers to read from the Psalms. The reason is evident. The Psalms are readily turned to and their rare poetic beauty make them desirable reading. Why neglect the very valuable reading of biography? Today the teacher would like to read a lesson on friendship based on the lives of David and Jonathan but is unable to find the passage, he then complacently turns to the Psalms. Suppose he desires to read a lesson on courage. Where is such a lesson? This "Guide" points you quickly to what you want or supplies for you many suggestions.

Secondly. When the passage has been chosen, the next important concern should be to read it intelligently and interestingly. You, as a teacher, at once recognize the importance of intelligent reading.

III. What Are the Benefits to Be Derived from Such a Well Prepared Procedure?

I truly believe that the benefits to be derived are greater than we realize them to be. The very fact that the pupil notices that the teacher is prepared for the first five minutes as well as for the rest of the day at once gains the attention and respect of the pupil. To begin the day in a shiftless manner is to break up the morale of the school. Later the teacher may be compelled to use effective discipline in order to get into the student body a good morale which he himself was the cause of losing. To begin the day RIGHT is tremendously important. The first five minutes may often determine the nature and spirit of the remainder of the day's work.

Most of the pupils of our schools have been taught a

proper reverence for the Bible. The teacher's attitude, whatever it may be, will soon be discovered. To have a proper regard for the Bible as well as a real interest in the pupil will gain the respect of the pupil for the teacher. To be respected by the pupil is absolutely essential to a well regulated, well disciplined, and well taught school. Let us come to our schoolrooms with ready minds and ready hands, always showing forth the spirit of interest and alertness.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

The method used in the make-up of the "Guide" offers the very widest freedom in its use. The arrangement of the passages is the simplest possible, the only motive being that of convenience to the teacher. The first index in the "Guide" is the Biblical Index to the Old Testament. The author simply began reading with the opening verse of the Old Testament and read through to the end, choosing from this vast amount of material all passages suitable for the schoolroom. All the writings of the Old Testament fell naturally into four main divisions, namely, Historical-Biographical Narratives, Biographical, Prophetic, Poetic and Didactic. To each passage a Biblical title was assigned, for example, "Abraham offering up Isaac." This same reading appears in the Topical Index under the title "Obedience." This simple method of arrangement is followed in the Biblical Index to the New Testament. A teacher may use this "Guide" in many ways. One may choose to read from prophecy for a month or for a like period of time from the biographical narratives. One may also begin reading with the first topic in the Biblical Index to the Old Testament and continue this throughout the year thus giving the leading events in the development of Israel's history.

Topical readings may be used for a season. The "Guide" may be used in any of many ways desirable to the teacher.

Each topic listed is one reading. The readings average about ten verses in length.

The readings for Special Days and Seasons may be used to good advantage upon such special days lending interest to the occasion.

Readings for Lower Grades.

In the Biblical Index to the Old Testament, the author has purposely arranged a connected story of the lives of Joseph and Moses which he believes will be found interesting as well as helpful. All the biographical narratives are suitable for lower grades except the life of Job which is undoubtedly too difficult. The Prophets and Epistles also are rather difficult. These general suggestions must suffice, leaving the matter of selection to the good judgment of the teacher.

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to the

OLD TESTAMENT

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Creation .....Gen. 1:14-25.
Creation .....Gen. 1:26—2:3.
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Cain and Abel .....Gen. 4:1-15.

FLOOD STORY

God's wrath upon the earth..Gen. 6:5-12.
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The great rains.....Gen. 7:13-24.
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Rainbow as a promise.....Gen. 9:8-17.
Abram seeks a new land.....Gen. 12:1-10.
Abraham's kindness to visitorsGen. 18:1-8.
Sodom and Gomorrah destroyedGen. 19:15-28.
Abraham offers up Isaac.....Gen. 22:1-12.

Esau sells his birthright.....Gen. 25:27-34.
Isaac deceived by his wife....Gen. 27:1-17.
Isaac deceived by his son.....Gen. 27:18-29.
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Brothers plan to get rid of Joseph .....Gen. 37:12-22.
Joseph sold, his father weeps..Gen. 37-23-36.
Joseph advanced in Potiphar's house .....Gen. 39:1-6.
Joseph falsely put into prison..Gen. 39:17-23.
Joseph put in charge of prisoners .....Gen. 40:1-13.
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Pharaoh's dream .....Gen. 41:1-13.
Joseph requested to interpret..Gen. 41:14-24.
Joseph interprets dream.....Gen. 41:25-36.
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Joseph deals prudently with his brothers .....Gen. 42:1-20.
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Armistice Day
Nov. 11

Wars to cease ..... Ps. 46.
Wars to cease ..... Ps. 72.
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Ascension Day

Ascension of Christ ..... Mk. 16:14-20.

Ash Wednesday

Fasting ..... Matt. 6:16-21.

Autumn

Nature ..... Ps. 147.
God visits the earth ..... Ps. 65.

Bird Day

Behold the fowls of the air .... Matt. 6:19-34.

Closing Day

Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.....Ecc. chap. 12.
Use of Talents.....Matt. 25:14-30.

Christmas Day

Prologue to John's gospel....Jno. 1:1-18.
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Oct. 12

Paul's treacherous sea voyage..Acts, chap, 27.
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Edison's Birthday
Feb. 11

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Education Week

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June 15

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April 18

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Holy Week

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